



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health

What you need to know about your drinking water

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) and the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) began providing bottled water Friday for drinking and cooking to residents of the Town of Blades and area residents. This action was taken after DNREC testing discovered perfluorinated compounds (PFCs), a large group of man-made chemicals that are used in industry and consumer products, in the town's wells. PFCs do not occur naturally, but are widespread in the environment and are found in people, wildlife, and fish.

Q. How long has DNREC known that the Town of Blades' municipal wells contained perfluorinated compounds (PFCs) at a level above the national health advisory?

A. DNREC received final results Feb. 7 about the elevated level of PFCs in Blades drinking water.

Q. When did DNREC sample these wells before?

A. This is the first time DNREC has sampled for PFCs. These chemicals are not regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act, therefore they are not part of the water systems' routine sampling for such chemicals as lead.

Q. Why did DNREC sample the wells at this time?

A. DNREC sampled the Blades wells in coordination with EPA because of their proximity to potential sources of PFCs from historical industrial processes in the area.

Q. What are the concentrations (of PFOS) from the water sampled by DNREC?

A. All three municipal drinking water wells exceeded the national health advisory of combined PFOs/PFOA of 70 parts per trillion (70/ppt). These ranged from 96.2/ppt to 187.1/ppt.

Q. What are the next steps by DNREC and DPH in addressing the situation in Blades?

A. Drinking water will continue to be provided between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. to Blades and area residents by bottled water and by tankers from the Delaware National Guard. DNREC is working to obtain a temporary carbon treatment system for the Blades water distribution system that will remove PFCs and ensure Blades drinking water is below the human health advisory level.

Q. Where can drinking water provided by DNREC and DPH be picked up by Blades and area residents?

A. Water can be obtained daily starting Saturday, Feb. 10, from 7 a.m.-10 p.m. at the Blades Fire Hall, 200 E. 5th St.

Q. How long will DNREC and DPH continue to provide an alternative source of drinking and cooking water for Blades and area residents?

A. Until a permanent solution is found that reduces PFCs in Blades' drinking water to an acceptable level.

Q. What are some of the concerns affiliated with these chemicals?

A. There are some health concerns, primarily associated with long-term exposures. According to the Agencies for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, the effects can include impacts on growth, learning and behavior of children, lowering a woman's chance of getting pregnant, interfering with the body's natural hormones, increasing cholesterol levels, affecting the immune system and increasing the risk of cancer. There is limited evidence of the effects, as more research is needed, but the water restrictions are being put in place to end exposures.

Q. Who should I call for more information?

Contact Marjorie Crofts, DNREC Division of Waste & Hazardous Substances at 302-632-1928. For public health-related questions, contact Jamie Mack at 302-745-0076.

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